Closure/shifting of post offices

1864. SHRI S.S. AHLUWALIA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a number of post offices, particularly in districts and semi-urban areas have been reduced by closing and/or shifting out from their age old addresses to distant places or merger with major post offices and so on;

(b) if so, the details thereof for the last five years, year-wise;

(c) the reasons therefor; and

(d) the steps being taken to ensure that citizens especially elder/infirm, who had been dependent upon the post offices in close proximity for communication/small saving and other services were not put to much inconvenience due to such closure/shifting etc.?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (DR. SHAKEEL AHMAD): (a) Yes, Sir. The number of post offices has slightly reduced due to closure and merger of some of the post offices.

(b) The details of post offices closed, relocated/shifted and merged from 2002-03 to 2006-07 are given in the Statement (*See* below).

(c) Closure of post offices is resorted to in very rare and unavoidable circumstances *e.g.* completion of construction work of a dam, dilapidated accommodation, court orders for vacation of buildings and availability of post offices in close proximity. Further, some of the post offices, which were no longer justified in their original locations, were relocated to other needy areas for catering to the postal requirements of those areas where there was demand and justification for postal facilities. Merger of some of the post offices has taken place for providing better postal facilities through bigger post offices. The Department is committed to fulfill its Universal Service Obligations. While fulfilling these obligations, relocation/merger of some of the post offices had become a necessity for serving some under-served areas without affecting access to postal facilities.

(d) Before relocating/merging any post office, care has been taken to ensure that other post offices are available in the vicinity and that level of access to postal network is not affected so that the citizens, especially elder/infirm are not put to much inconvenience. The communication/small savings facilities are provided through nearby post offices so that inconvenience is not caused to the citizens. The interests of the customers have been kept in mind before any such closure, relocation/shifting and merger of post offices.

Statement

Number of post offices closed, relocated/shifted and merged in districts/semi-urban areas

Sl. No.	Year	No. of Post Offices Closed			
		In urban areas	In rural areas	In semi-urban areas	Total
1	2002-03	2	2	Nil	4
2	2003-04	7	3	Nil	10
3	2004-05	15	5	Nil	20
4	2005-06	14	2	Nil	16
5	2006-07	6	2	1	9
	TOTAL:	44	14	1	59
		No. of Post Offices Relocated			
1	2002-03	3	1	Nil	4
2	2003-04	21	6	1	28
3	2004-05	58	10	1	69
4	2005-06	49	13	2	64
5	2006-07	59	16	Nil	75
	Total:	190	46	4	240
		No. of Post Offices Merged			
1	2002-03	14	Nil	Nil	14
2	2003-04	71	9	1	81
3	2004-05	144	10	1	155
4	2005-06	82	3	1	86
5	2006-07	111	13	2	132
	TOTAL:	428	35	5	468

Post and telegraph offices in rented buildings in Punjab

1865. SHRI VARINDER SINGH BAJWA: Will the Minister of COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY be pleased to state:

(a) the number of post and telegraph offices other than non-departmental ones in the State of Punjab at present which are housed in rented buildings;